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## Walsh Said to Study Officials' Testimony On Help for Contras

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WASHINGTON, May 10 — Lawrence E. Walsh, the special prosecutor in the Iran-contra affair, is closely studying Congressional testimony by a group of current and former Reagan Administration officials to determine whether false statements were made about aid to the Nicaraguan rebels, according to Federal investigators.

They said Mr. Walsh was paying particular attention to statements made to Congress by Elliott Abrams, an Assistant Secretary of State; Robert C. McFarlane, the former national security adviser, and officers of the Central Intelligence Agency.

### McFarlane Due to Testify

Mr. Abrams has come under scrutiny, the investigators said, because of testimony denying Government involvement in the private aid network and because he initially did not tell of his personal effort to solicit a \$10 million donation for the rebels, known as the contras, from the Sultan of Brunei.

Mr. McFarlane is scheduled to begin testimony Monday before the special Congressional committees investigating the Iran-contra affair. He is expected to apologize for his October 1985 statement to Congress denying ties between the National Security Council staff and fund-raising for the contras.

Mr. Walsh's intentions are not clear. While it is illegal to lie to Congress, the crime is rarely prosecuted. Proving that testimony was intentionally false can be difficult, and Administration officials usually do not testify under oath.

One Federal investigator suggested that Mr. Walsh seemed more likely to use evidence of false statements to bring conspiracy charges. The statements could then be described as acts that furthered a conspiracy to violate Congressional restrictions on contra aid.

Mr. Walsh has said that his staff would review transcripts of the current Congressional hearings on the Iran-contra affair to determine whether perjury was being committed.

Mr. Abrams, who oversees Latin American policies at the State Department, recently obtained a private lawyer, W. DeVier Pierson, to help him prepare for investigations by Mr. Walsh and Congress. Mr. Pierson said his client had not been contacted by Mr. Walsh's staff.

The lawyer said it was not surprising that Mr. Walsh would review testimony by Mr. Abrams and others.

### Questions on Testimony

"I think they're doing what investigators always do," Mr. Pierson said. "If they are conducting an investigation that involves former or present Government officials, they look at prior testimony to see if it provides facts helpful for the investigation."

Lawmakers have repeatedly questioned whether Mr. Abrams's Congressional testimony about contra aid was accurate and complete. Although he has denied involvement in the covert and apparently illegal program to supply the contras in 1985 and 1986, some members of Congress say they do not believe his denials.

They note that Mr. Abrams, an acerbic official who seems to relish battles with Congress, had frequent contact with Lieut. Col. Oliver L. North, the former national security aide who coordinated the contra support network.

Mr. Abrams has also been chairman of the Restricted Interagency Group, an informal group of Government officials, once including Colonel North, who helped coordinate contra policy. Lewis A. Tambs, who was Ambassador to Costa Rica until January, said the group's core officers, including Mr. Abrams, directed him to lend support both to the contras and to the private Americans who were supplying them with arms.

### 'Up to His Eyeballs'

"I didn't believe Abrams then, and I don't believe him now," said Representative Peter H. Kostmayer, Democrat of Pennsylvania and a member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, which has often heard testimony from Mr. Abrams. "I think he's up to his eyeballs in this stuff."

Other lawmakers, however, have strongly defended Mr. Abrams.

Federal investigators said Mr. Walsh would review Mr. Abrams's appearance on Nov. 25 before a closed meeting of the Senate Intelligence Committee.

That testimony has not been made public, but a committee report on the investigation said Mr. Abrams was asked about "third-country support" for the contras. He failed to mention soliciting \$10 million from the Sultan of Brunei last summer to aid the contras.

At about the same time, Mr. Abrams was quoted publicly as saying, "Nobody in this building had any idea of any contributions coming from a foreign government."

In testimony before the Senate Intelligence Committee on Dec. 8, however, Mr. Abrams was placed under oath, acknowledged the Brunei donation, and apologized "for withholding this information," the committee's report said.

"He said he did not feel he had been asked a direct question and did not realize until shown the transcript that his statements clearly left a misleading impression," the report said.

A Congressional official with knowledge of the committee's investigation said Mr. Abrams admitted to gaps in his testimony only after he was confronted with the transcript at a meeting with senators.

When the lawmakers learned of omissions in his testimony, "everybody

got upset about it," the official said.

An associate of Mr. Abrams said the account was inaccurate. It was Mr. Abrams, he said, who made the original effort to clear up the misunderstanding over the testimony.

Shortly after the November testimony, the associate said, Mr. Abrams went to his superiors at the State Department, received permission to disclose the Brunei donation, and, without prompting, went back to the committee to tell the full story.

Federal investigators said Mr. Walsh will also study Mr. Abrams's testimony on Oct. 15, when he was asked by a House Foreign Affairs subcommittee to discuss the crash in Nicaragua of an American cargo plane carrying contra supplies. The only survivor was Eugene Hasenfus, an American mercenary, who was captured by Nicaragua, convicted in a trial and later released.

The flight was part of the supply network connected to Colonel North. Documents recently made public show that Colonel North tried to find a lawyer for Mr. Hasenfus after the crash early in October.

In his testimony, Mr. Abrams repeatedly denied any Government involvement in the flight.

"It was not organized, directed or financed by the U.S. Government," he said in prepared testimony. "Many private citizens come forward to help in that struggle for freedom. I do not know who they are, any more than I know the identity of the Americans who are helping the Communist regime in Nicaragua."

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